

Wisconsin Ethics Commission

For State Public Officials

Solicitations

This Guideline is provided as an information resource only. For authoritative advice, contact the Wisconsin Ethics Commission. **Legal references:** WIS. STATS. §§11.0206, 13.625, 19.45(2) and (3), and 19.56(3).

Limitations on Solicitation

A candidate may solicit a contribution for a non-profit organization with which the candidate is associated. "Associated," when used with reference to an organization, includes any organization in which an individual or a member of his or her immediate family is a director, officer, or trustee, or owns or controls, directly or indirectly, and severally or in the aggregate, at least 10 percent of the outstanding equity or of which an individual or a member of his or her immediate family is an authorized representative or agent.

A state public official should not solicit a contribution from anyone for any other organization of which the official or the official's spouse or legal dependent is an officer, director, employee or authorized representative or agent.

A state public official should not solicit a charitable or other contribution for any organization from a lobbyist, from an organization that employs a lobbyist, or from any person regulated by or doing business with the official's agency.

A state public official should not solicit a contribution for a state agency or state program from a lobbyist, from an organization that employs a lobbyist, or from any person regulated by or doing business with the official's agency.

A solicitation includes oral, written, and electronic communication.

Solutions For Instances When Solicitation Is Not Permitted

GOVERNMENT-RELATED EVENTS. A state agency seeking private support for a government-related activity may request assistance from a multi-state or national association with which the agency is affiliated. An agency may also request the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to solicit support for events promoting economic development or tourism and for conferences of multistate, national, or international associations of government officials. An agency may also request the Department of Tourism to solicit support for events promoting tourism.

LETTERHEAD AND LETTERS OF SUPPORT. An official affiliated with a private organization may permit the appearance of their name and title with the organization, but not their public office, on the organization's letterhead in the same style and prominence in which others similarly affiliated with the organization are identified. An official may also write a letter of endorsement for an organization that the organization may include in a fundraising solicitation, even if it is sent to a lobbyist or lobbying principal, as long as the endorsement letter does not solicit, urge, or endorse contributing to the organization.